



# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)**  
**<http://southwest.fws.gov>**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Plague Confirmed at Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge**

Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) near Muleshoe, Texas is informing the public that plague has been confirmed on the Refuge and is currently confined to two populations of prairie dogs. For public safety, Paul's Lake and the access road to the lake are temporarily closed to all public access.

Plague is widespread across the western United States and outbreaks are fairly common. Caused by a bacterium called *Yersinia pestis*, plague can be transmitted from animal to animal and from animal to human by the bites of infective fleas.

"To protect our visitors, we have voluntarily closed the area where plague has been found. It is well marked and we are asking the public to respect all signs and closures for their own safety," stated Refuge Manager Jude Smith. "We understand this closure may be an inconvenience to our visitors, however we expect this outbreak to pass fairly soon."

The Refuge is safe to visit and continues to welcome visitors. There are additional ways the public can protect themselves and their pets. Keep pets leashed and use flea powder or a flea collar. People should avoid animals with fleas and not camp or rest near animal burrows. Do not touch wild, sick, or dead animals. Wear insect repellent when outdoors. Plague is rare, but can be a serious disease if contracted by humans.

The Refuge is working with the Center for Disease Control and Texas Department of State Health Services on monitoring the current outbreak and will keep the public informed of any updates or changes through the Refuge website [www.fws.gov/refuge/muleshoe/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/muleshoe/)

For more information about the plague, including symptoms and treatment, please visit:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/plague/index.html>

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